



Request for Proposal

The City of Hickory, NC is seeking proposals to develop a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign. The City is specifically seeking to grow its population through recruiting active adults, “live anywhere” professionals and entrepreneurs. The branding and marketing initiative will focus on this objective. Secondly, the City’s brand should be easily expandable to incorporate existing economic development and tourism activities.

The branding initiative will dovetail with an existing community based web portal project and will be guided by the City’s recently appointed Business Development Committee. The BDC has identified a strong community brand and business/ people relocation marketing as its top priority. The BDC is made up of seven energetic, community supportive and outcome focused business people. The BDC will work with the City Manager, Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staffs in selecting the firm to perform the work and will be closely engaged in the development of the brand. Hickory City Council will have final acceptance authority of the work performed and will be engaged periodically throughout the project for feed back at appropriate stages.

Response to this RFP should include the following elements:

Scope of Services

- Conduct research needed with key publics to determine existing attitudes, perceptions, opportunities and challenges to enhancing the City’s image. Why are businesses, residents, visitors choosing us /not choosing us. How do we address that?
- Recommend specific necessary elements to deliver the message, i.e. visual elements, printed collateral, print advertising, web elements, media placement, public relations, events, etc.
- Develop strategies and tactical plans to position the messaging statements based on qualitative research and analysis of quantitative data.
- Work with portal development team to ensure that message is appropriately tailored and woven through out the web presence.
- Define how the core message is expanded to existing EDC and CVB initiatives and expandable to the broader regional partners and assets.

Related Experience: Proposal should address your overall capabilities to lead the destination branding process. Resumes of the individuals who will perform the work outlined in this proposal, including their capabilities and experience conducting similar work, are highly recommended.

Industry Knowledge: Proposal should provide in detail your experience in marketing for economic development, relocation and tourism, in addition to a brief synopsis explaining your philosophy on Destination Branding.

Research Capability: Proposal should address, in detail, their ability to gather and to effectively utilize research to assist the branding process. Each party should submit a list of any tasks that will be subcontracted and a list of the subcontracting firms. The ideal firm will be able to either perform these tasks in-house or operate as the lead contractor and subcontract the individual work items and create a final, comprehensive work product. The City of Hickory reserves the right to approve any sub-contractor of the lead contracting firm's team.

Proposed Action Plan, Time Frame and Expectations: Proposal should include an outline of what the organization can expect as part of the proposal along with applicable timelines and a proposed action plan. Please keep in mind the organization's general expectations as outlined above.

Compensation/Budget:: Proposal should submit project costs for services along with a payment schedule and an explanation on how fees are established. The City estimates a budget for this project of \$60,000.

Client References: Each party should provide three professional references for similar work that has been performed by your firm including the names, addresses, titles and telephone numbers of the person most familiar with the work. Executive summaries of other brands that the agency has developed are highly recommended.

REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HICKORY

This Request for Proposals does not commit the City of Hickory to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal to this request, or to procure or contract for services. The City of Hickory reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, negotiate with any qualified source(s) or cancel, in part or entirely, this RFP, if it is in the best interest of the City of Hickory.

All work performed on behalf of the City of Hickory becomes the property of the City of Hickory including, but not limited to, hard copies, diskettes, CD's, DVD's, data bases, research, etc. All final reports prepared under the contract shall be the property of the City of Hickory and may not be used or reproduced in any form without the explicit written permission of the City of Hickory.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Interested firms should submit the above requested information to: Mandy Pitts, City of Hickory Communications Director mpitts@ci.hickory.nc.us by Friday, June 11, 2010.

SELECTION

Selection will be based on the firm's experience and qualifications as described in the consultant's submittal and ability to provide the required services. The City of Hickory may conduct interviews with one or more of the most qualified firms submitting qualifications.

Any questions regarding this request for proposals should be directed to Mandy Pitts at mpitts@ci.hickory.nc.us or call (828) 261-2222.